Visual Disability in Latvia: What Do the Last 5 Years of Data Show?

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Purpose: To analyse the prevalence, temporal trends and main ophthalmological causes of disability associated with visual functional impairment in Latvia between 2021 and 2025, with particular focus on newly established disability.

Methods: National statistical data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (CSP) and detailed data from the Ministry of Welfare/VDEAVK were analysed for 2021–2025. The analysis included the number of persons with visual functional impairment, disability groups, newly and repeatedly established disability, demographic characteristics, and ophthalmological diagnoses. Detailed diagnostic data for 2023–2025 were additionally analysed by ICD-10 disease groups.

Results: In 2025, 12,202 persons with disability and visual functional impairment were recorded in Latvia, including 11,965 adults and 238 children. Compared with 2021, the total number increased by 24.6%, while the number of children decreased by 24.7%. In adults, 762 new cases of disability due to eye diseases were recorded in 2025, representing a 26.2% increase compared with 2021. Ophthalmological diseases (ICD-10 H00–H59) accounted for 97% of these cases. In the detailed 2025 data, retinal diseases (H35) and glaucoma (H40) were the most frequently represented diagnostic groups, with 567 diagnostic records combined. Within H35, age-related macular degeneration (H35.3) accounted for approximately 88% of records. The majority of newly established disability records concerned individuals aged ≥65 years (69%).

Conclusions: Disability associated with visual functional impairment remains an important public health issue in Latvia. Retinal diseases and glaucoma represent the major ophthalmological diagnostic groups associated with newly established disability, particularly among older adults. The findings highlight the importance of early detection, timely evidence-based treatment and long-term monitoring of patients at risk of significant visual loss.

Source basis: CSP and Ministry of Welfare/VDEAVK data presented in the accompanying presentation, 2021–2025.